



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 104<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 141

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1995

No. 199

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Father, as nature abhors a vacuum, You deplore deadlocks that debilitate progress. We confess that we are hammerlocked and pinned to the mat by seemingly unresolvable differences in the negotiations between the Congress and the White House over the budget. The clock is running and ticks toward tomorrow's deadline. Meanwhile, the Nation watches, worries, and wonders.

Lord, help us to reorder our priorities. Deliberately we set aside self-serving manipulation. We trade in our party spirit for the spirit of patriotism. Grant both sides in this negotiation that triumphant transition that happens when we give up the pride of thinking that we have all of the answers and dare to pray, "Lord, show us the way to break this deadlock." Displace our distrust of each other; replace it with a deep commitment to creative compromise. There is so much on which both factions agree. Give us the will to press on until workable solutions are found. We begin this day asking You to work in the minds and hearts of those who bear the responsibility of finding Your solution. Give them clear heads and willing hearts. We ask this for the good of the Nation and for the continuing respect of the people for the ability of the executive and legislative branches of Government to work together to govern this land. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

### PROGRAM

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 10:30 with Senators permitted to speak up to 5 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator WELLSTONE, 30 minutes; Senator MURKOWSKI, 15 minutes; Senator JEFFORDS, 15 minutes.

At 10:30 this morning, the Senate will begin consideration of the Interior appropriations conference report, H.R. 1977. That conference report is limited to 6 hours of debate. However, some of that debate time may be yielded back.

Following a vote on the Interior appropriations conference report, the Senate may turn to the consideration of the State Department reorganization bill under a previously agreed to 4-hour time limit. Rollcalls can therefore be expected throughout the day today.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. (Mr. INHOFE assumed the chair.)

### LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rose last week to talk about an issue that is critical to people in my State, and across the Northeast and upper Midwest. There have been scores of editorials in major newspapers all across the country dealing with a fundamental moral issue that we, in this Nation, are confronted with this week in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The title of this editorial is "Pray for Warm Winter. GOP Plans Mean Pork and a Loss of Heating Aid."

I am going to be joined by a number of colleagues throughout the day who want to speak on this issue. My colleague from Wisconsin is here, Senator KOHL. I wish to make sure that other

colleagues know that only late last night did we realize we would have some time today. But there have been a number of Senators who have taken a lead on this issue—Senator LEAHY, Senator JEFFORDS, Senator COHEN, Senator SNOWE, Senator KENNEDY, Senator HARKIN, Senator ABRAHAM, Senator MOYNIHAN, and others—Democrats and Republicans alike.

Mr. President, fuel assistance programs across the country have run out of money, and people are being forced out in the cold. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now, and time rushes on. Quite frankly, whether or not this continuing resolution is for 2 or 3 days, or whether there is another continuing resolution for 1 week or whatever has absolutely nothing to do with the essential fact that there are men, women, and children in the Northeast, Midwest, and cold weather States who are going cold right now. More short-term fixes won't cut it anymore. There are long waiting lists throughout the country, and when people in this program don't get served, they don't heat their homes. In the State of New York, for example, I have heard that people are being told to come back in March to apply for energy assistance. Come back in March, when it's freezing there now. In my State of Minnesota—and I am sure it is the case in my colleague's State of Wisconsin—this weekend temperatures are right around zero.

We have to allocate this money now, and the problem is that for all of our States we are faced with the situation of needing the money desperately, right now. Let there be no mistake. This is not really a 1-year program, it is basically a 6-month heating program. We need to get funding to people for energy assistance now. By this time in Minnesota last year, as opposed to \$9 million, we had about \$25 million out in our State. Right now, Mr. President,

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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